

Metropolitan Homelessness Commission

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
May 30, 2017, 8:30 am
at Metro Social Services, 800 2nd Ave. N

Attendance:

Executive Committee members: Liz Allen Fey, Renee Pratt, Wendell Segroves, Mina Johnson, Paula Foster; Mayor's Office: Erik Cole; Metro Legal: Mark Murray

Staff: Judith Tackett, Jessica Ivey, Sally Besuden, Joseph Parker, Troy Jenkins

Meeting was called to order at 8:30 am

Approval of Minutes

The group waited until Paula Foster was present to approve the minutes. Then Wendell Segroves made the motion to approve the executive committee minutes of May 12, 2017, seconded by Paula Foster. All approved.

Budget

Lisa Ricketts presented the FY17/18 budget and went line by line over the changes. Most of them were related to moving the THDA ESG grant funds over to the Metro budget line items. Judith Tackett summarizes that besides the outreach team, the main budget additions are an office assistant and HMIS licenses. The rest was mainly to maintain the current budget through the transition phase we're in.

Liz Allen Fey and Judith Tackett spoke about the How's Nashville fund, which is only sufficient for another 2-3 months. Judith Tackett said that there is a chance for this year to supplement the fund with CDBG funds through MDHA, which has been the main funding stream over the past couple of years. She said she continued to work with Angie Hubbard on this. However, with the federal budget potentially completely cutting the CDBG funds, there is a need to look for other funding. She said the Metro budget was already submitted before the federal budget announcement was made with the potential CDBG cuts. Liz Allen Fey said the conversations would need to start to look at bringing in other funders. Ms. Tackett noted that it was difficult to fundraise and avoid being in competition with partner nonprofits. Ms. Fey said it needed to be a collaborative approach with the partner agencies, and see whether this was a priority for them. Ms. Tackett said she is planning to start monthly check-ins with housing navigator supervisors and could start the conversation with partner agencies there about how to solve this issue.

Policy Updates

Judith Tackett went over two policies: One was requested by the IT department and she turned it back in to them with a request whether the Commission would actually fall under the MSS policy on how to post agendas and minutes. She reported that she's been working in the setup of how to announce meetings and post them with IT and believed MHC had been in line with the policy. The second policy is in regard to how MHC deals

with media requests when reporters want to accompany the NOTE/outreach team to encampments. The policy is written to acknowledge the rights to freedom of speech of people living in encampments as well as being respectful to them. The policy only addresses expectations of media when media specifically requests to accompany MHC staff. After brief discussion the executive committee will recommend to the full Commission to send an approval request to the MSS Board. Renee Pratt confirmed that policies must be presented to the MSS Board for final approval.

Contract updates

Judith Tackett presented an update to the Centerstone contract for CTI case management. She reported that through the Centerstone contract and the CABHI grant contract, which also provides CTI, we know that about 20% of people need longer case management services. There seems a gap in services for people who need long-term case management but do not have insurance coverage for it. Thus, as a stop gap measure, Ms. Tackett suggests to adjust the current contract and allow Centerstone to serve up to 20% of people for an additional year if needed. This would give us, as a community and as the Commission time to collect more community data and determine how to fill that service gap as a community.

Discussion ensued over what the role of the Commission is. Paula Foster asked what the reasons were that people after the end of CTI were not connected. Ms. Tackett said for some it was that they were not eligible for existing ongoing case management service and others were not willing to be connected. Ms. Foster said one of the issues to discuss was that if people were not willing to be connected to other services, what should the consequence be. Judith Tackett stated that we needed more time as a community to discuss this issue. Jessica Ivey, the CES manager, was invited to speak. Ms. Ivey stated that at the present time the community infrastructure was just not in place to address this issue fully and fill the gaps. Erik Cole said the same issue came up years ago around the lack of ongoing wraparound services for people who are extremely vulnerable. Judith Tackett agreed and said she would like to get to a place where the Commission could look at all of its contracts and determine what their goals are. Renee Pratt said MSS has an internal audit process. She said there were several contracts that needed changes. Ms. Pratt suggested to look at all of them at one time. It was determined to focus on contract changes for the July Council meetings.

Ms. Foster stated that at some point there would need to have to be the right services put in place, but with that said, she was OK with this change. She proposed to change the wording from “up to 20%” to “approximately 20%.” All agreed.

Further discussion focused on the need to have clear governance in place to set direction and prioritization on who and how we serve the most vulnerable people in our community with existing resources.

Liz Allen Fey said this conversation needs to be held at the Commission table. She said for too long commissioners have been trusting others to take care of these issues.

Judith Tackett also brought up the Room In The Inn Day Room and Guest House contracts, which are up for renewal. A lengthy discussion ensued over Ms. Tackett’s proposal to change the contracts and work with RITI on a plan with the goal to enter all data into HMIS. RITI, at present, does not have the capacity for various reasons. The

underlying issue is that if we, as a community want to capture data outcomes, then we must collect it in HMIS. Paula Foster said that if it was in the contract that everyone should be entered into HMIS, and that was the goal of the Commission to support the community data collection, then that's what needed to be done. Ms. Tackett argued that while she agreed that this was the end goal, she suggested work with organizations to reach that goal and make sure the support is there to do it properly. RITI has always agreed to share data and has taken the lead on some data collection fronts for the community. It was determined that Judith Tackett would reach out to Rachel Hester and see if she could set up a meeting between Rachel Hester, a RITI Board member, Liz Allen Fey, and Judith Tackett to discuss the data entry matter.

Director Search Update

Renee Pratt reported that six applicants were selected for interviewing in June. Interview questions would be sent out. The hope was to have someone in place as early as July. Liz Allen Fey said that MHC said the goal was to have a director in place by August, which looks like would happen with the current timeline. The selection panel includes Renee Pratt, Liz Allen Fey, Wendell Segroves, Freddie O'Connell, and a member of the MSS Board of Commissioners. A meeting among the panel will be scheduled next week to go over the process and schedule the interviews. A total of 24 applicants qualified for the position.

Governance Discussion

Erik Cole gave a brief update on where the governance discussion was. He said the CoC membership established a charter that gives the CoC governance more authority. It beefs up the membership process and leadership selection process. Next steps are to establish a membership committee to develop a solid membership roster with diverse stakeholders, and a nominating committee to select board members.

Discussion focused on the governance board and what the next steps were to move forward. The executive committee engaged in some back and forth as to where discussions get stopped. One question was who moves first to ask for a merger of the two bodies. Erik Cole was clear that the Mayor is asking what needed to happen to move it forward. He clarified that the talk was about the governance/board level not the staff level. Wendell Segroves and Paula Foster raised the issues of trust and transparency. Paula Foster said that Erik Cole had made it quite clear that a merger of the boards is what he would like to see. Liz Allen Fey said she needed to clarify that this idea came up out of the design team that was set up by the HUD TA (Cloudburst). Further discussion focused on what the community wants and what the community concerns were. Liz Allen Fey asked when we talk about community, how many people are we talking about? 3 voices or 30 voices? She said she just wanted to get a feel for how big the community voice was. Ms. Foster said she had heard from eight people representing 8 different organizations who have voiced their concerns. Erik Cole said one option would be to entirely replace the CoC Board, but then it would take probably another 6 months to rebuild the board. Paula Foster said that maybe Mr. Cole wasn't the right person to present these issues. Erik Cole agreed, stating that he had been saying that for years. Liz Allen Fey said the entire process was about leadership and whenever any person steps up to lead, people will have things to say. We need to acknowledge that no everyone is

going to be pleased with the process or the outcome or think this is the best idea. Ms. Fey said the fact was that our community had two outside entities come in and tell us that we needed to merge. Ms. Fey also said she had stated on multiple occasions that her intent is to step away as soon as the governance issue was determined. But she said the people sitting at the board table needed to be decision makers in order to be able to examine where the resources are to make a true impact in our community in terms of ending homelessness. Mina Johnson said the two pillars that the boards represent do not make sense. She said the community needed one governance structure that was clear. The executive committee acknowledged that there are multiple issues and distractions that have prevented a smooth process. However, everyone acknowledged that change is underway even though it is hard.

Liz Allen Fey raised the question of whether the executive committee believed that these two entities needed to be combined, and if not, why not. Paula Foster said she was not sure. She said she was still concerned about what the structure would look like. Wendell Segroves agreed. With MSS stepping out, what does that mean. Erik Cole said the last three weeks have been very confusing, but he stressed that we needed to focus on leadership and not on the collaborative applicant, which is agency specific and focuses on management.

Liz Allen Fey said for a merger between the Commission and the CoC Board, the Metro ordinance would have to be altered. Mark Murray, who represents Metro Legal, confirmed that the CoC charter and the ordinance would need to match. Paula Foster said but before that could happen, the CoC membership would have to agree. Erik Cole confirmed that.

After further discussion, the executive committee agreed that the best way to move forward was for the full Commission to take a vote on whether they agree to a merger and then move to request that the CoC membership enter a discussion about a possible merger. All members of the executive committee agreed. Paula Foster suggested to ask the CoC to be on their next agenda if the Commission votes on Friday.

Announcements

Judith Tackett announced the June -7 community workshop with Dr. Joe Savage from USICH on the federal criteria and benchmark to end Veteran homelessness. The workshop is open to the community and runs from 1-4 p.m. It is held in the Sonny West Conference Center.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:52 am.